



A Critique of Western Civilization from the Perspective of Mahdist Doctrines

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Abstract

The dominant thought in the Western environment laid the necessary foundations for the formation of Western civilization. In fact, the Renaissance's approach to God, humanity, and the surrounding environment gradually caused profound changes in human lifestyles at various levels, eventually replacing the traditional, meaning-oriented relationship between humans and their surroundings with a modern, meaning-deficient one. This study presents a critique of Western civilization from the perspective of Mahdist teachings. The article is written using a descriptive and analytical approach. Today, the West faces numerous challenges at various levels, to the extent that, according to Western thinkers, these issues were not resolved even with the emergence of postmodernism. This is because the civilizational system,

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grounded in Renaissance thought, adopts a materialistic worldview and denies the unseen in its perception of God, self, and existence.

Keywords

Modernity, West, technology, Mahdism, mechanization, Era of Reappearance (of Imam al-Mahdi).

Introduction

Based on the intellectual framework of the Renaissance movement, a machine-driven civilization was launched, and as a result, compliance with this framework, willingly or unwillingly, will inevitably push societies towards further Westernization. Consequently, the architects of the Renaissance strive to implement the project of globalization and create a unified material front in the path of modernity; because this machine, by relying on human sensual instincts, is both highly attractive and possesses a spirit aligned with Renaissance ideals. Thus, if a society rides on this machine, it will lose its sense of meaning, and gradually, the Renaissance way of life will be injected into its thoughts and actions. The Renaissance philosophy is based on atheism, and this phenomenon manifests itself in various spheres of modernity. The Renaissance idea of change is rooted in the slogan of altering nature and deconstructing spiritualism, with Satan leading it; this call for change was one of his claims when he was expelled from the Garden of Eden. This stands in stark contrast to the ideal of Mahdism, which seeks to guide existence toward paradise, liberating humanity from all the perils posed by Satan.

Among the works written in the field of modernism and its associated challenges, the following can be mentioned:

1. "Religion in the Modern World" by Mahdi Nekouei Samani, published in 2007 in the *Ma'rifat* journal.
2. "The Necessity and Future of Religion from the Perspective of Modernism and Postmodernism" by Soleiman Khakban, published in 2018 by *Qabasāt* journal.
3. "Islam and Modernity" by Abdolhossein Khosropanah, published in 2013 by *Islamic Theology* journal.
4. "The Relationship Between Religion and Modernity:

Conflict or Compatibility?” by Abbas Yazdani, published in 2010 by *Comparative Theology* journal.

5. “The Relationship Between Science and Religion, Modernity, and Islamic Identity” by a group of authors, published in 2015 by the *National Conference on the Intersections of Humanities*.

However, the distinguishing feature of this work, compared to the above-mentioned works, is as follows: (1) This work addresses a critique of modernism; (2) It explores the confrontational relationship between modernism and the doctrine of Mahdism; (3) It offers the necessity of resolving the issues of modernism through the teachings of Mahdism. In this context, in order to provide a practical model for addressing the damages of Western civilization, this work will answer the question: From the perspective of the teachings of Mahdism, what are the flaws of Western civilization?

1. Science in the City of Reappearance and Renaissance Thought

The Renaissance was not merely a period in time, but rather a way of life and thinking. During this era, the school of empiricism and materialism gradually gained more prominence, paving the way for the dismantling of spiritualism in Western life and establishing a new culture based on novel principles.

The front that emerged after this period adopted a completely different doctrinal path compared to the past; as new beliefs were gradually established, new intellectual principles and foundations replaced the previous thoughts. Although the emergence of this new thinking appeared positive at first and seemed to advocate for a new scientific movement, the underlying thought behind it was in direct opposition to spiritualism.

In the monotheistic worldview, our knowledge is a reflection of divine knowledge, derived from the data that God has provided to us: "Allah has brought you forth from the bellies of your mothers while you did not know anything. He made for you hearing, eyesight, and hearts so that you may give thanks" (Quran 16:78). This noble verse refers to the origins of knowledge, which God has bestowed upon humanity. The origin of all perceptions lies in the external senses, primarily sight and hearing, while other senses, namely touch, taste, and smell, do not carry the same significance as these two. The origin of affirmation and thought, however, is the heart (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2009, vol. 12, p. 452).

The immaturity of knowledge during the era of the Church's dominance and the numerous doctrinal deviations among Western religious scholars at the time all contributed to accelerating the establishment of this new perspective. Empiricism gradually reinforced the sense of independence from the unseen in the societies that embraced the Renaissance, and new methodologies emerged in opposition to the previous church-based culture. Laboratory sciences and the new style of knowledge production helped foster widespread rational thinking in these societies, and anything beyond the tangible was denied. Jules Michelet, in his *History of the Renaissance* (1855), called the Renaissance era the absolute antithesis of the Middle Ages, as in the dark period of the Middle Ages, any discussion of natural and physical sciences was considered contrary to the teachings of the Church and harmful to society, with speakers being subjected to severe punishments (Nozari, 2000, p. 24).

In the era of the complete authority of God's proof after the occultation, knowledge will emerge in such a way that it will offer a program for all of humanity's vital systems, without humans facing the challenge of alienation from themselves or being led into

forgetfulness. This is because, during this period, the truth of religion will become manifest, and people will witness the truths through their intellectual perfection, guided by God's comprehensive guidance. This will happen because the carnal desires, which have been the greatest obstacles to the formation of knowledge and understanding, will be eradicated. In fact, one of the pitfalls of thought, according to the Holy Quran, is the inclinations and desires of the soul. If a person does not guard against the danger of their own desires in their thinking, they will become lost in misguidance.

In this time, sciences will be free from harm, and healthy technology will create the most beautiful life for humanity, a life that no one has been able to envision until now. The process of emergence is never in conflict with the advancement and evolution of human knowledge; rather, lofty sciences will, within the framework of God's creation, progress from two letters to twenty-seven letters. The era of the appearance (of the savior) will be a time of the spread and flourishing of knowledge, and the Islamic ideal city will be a city of science and knowledge. With the arrival of the world's savior, just as oppression and tyranny will give way to justice and fairness, and social disorder will be rectified, ignorance and lack of knowledge will also give way to science and understanding, and the world will be filled with the light of reason and knowledge. Sciences and knowledge that had been hidden behind veils through ages and centuries will be revealed, and the boundaries of knowledge and learning will expand to the very homes and depths of every individual's being.

2. Spiritualism and Negation of Human Relation to the Supernatural Realm

After the Renaissance, it was the era of the peak of materialism and worldly affairs for Western humanity, a time when spirituality and its

inherent qualities, which had appeared in societies, were challenged. As a result, during this period, humanity, driven by a desire for comfort and an increasing attachment to material pleasures, distanced itself from spiritualism, seeing it as a limiting concept. Consequently, it deprived itself to a great extent of spiritual pleasures and the gifts of spirituality.

What the thinkers of the Renaissance school refer to as limitation, from a religious perspective, is spiritual freedom—an attainment achieved by restraining oneself from base desires and carnal inclinations. However, the restrictions imposed by the Church led Western humanity to develop a deep aversion to anything that seemed limiting, viewing it as incompatible with their freedom. Yet, no thoughtful person would regard absolute freedom as a correct or attainable ideal, for not only the individual but human society as a whole would inevitably deteriorate.

Based on the culture of Western modernity, the tradition of maximal diversity-seeking was also established, causing global society to become increasingly trapped in cultural consequences aimed at stimulating and inflaming humanity's primal and sensual desires, further fueling the pursuit of maximum diversity. Western society, in its pursuit, demands a world without spirituality, and such an approach, due to the inherent principles governing the world—such as decay, limitations, conflicting interests, and so on—can never achieve satisfaction in desires. Therefore, it constantly faces failure in its theoretical existence and will ultimately descend into a form of nihilism and existential emptiness.

In the vision of the Era of Appearance, God will support and accompany the believers through faith, the perfection of their intellects, and divine aid, ultimately leading to the governance of the

Earth being entrusted to His complete representative, the Supreme Guardian of God (*Walī Allāh al-Aẓam*). Through his guardianship, God's sovereignty on Earth will be realized and manifested. This is because the infallible Imam holds the highest station of closeness to God, to the extent that his guardianship is considered the guardianship of God Himself. The connection between this guardianship and God's will takes on the role of cause and effect, such that the Imam's guardianship in the world becomes the cause of God's sovereignty in existence. Some hadiths have described the soul of the believer as being in the closest position to God's divine proximity, reflecting this relationship: "The soul of the believer is more closely connected to the soul of God than the rays of the sun are to the sun itself" (Majlisī, 2007, vol. 61, p. 148).

With the establishment of the unified divine governance, the sects that had managed to root themselves by winning the hearts of the oppressed in various societies will be sidelined, allowing a single government to prevail over the entire world. The followers of different religions, upon witnessing the representative of God and his superhuman qualities, will join this faith, and after the era of prophethood, Islam will be implemented in its comprehensive form, eradicating all manifestations of disbelief and polytheism from existence. The Prophet of God regarding the breaking of crosses and the killing of pigs, which symbolizes the realization of the singular religion of Islam, said: "The Imam al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) will appear as a just ruler, breaking the crosses, killing the pigs, and instructing his officers to collect wealth and distribute it in the cities. They will search for those in need, but there will be no one to claim need" (Maqdisī al-Shāfi'ī, 2010, p. 166).

At this time, humanity will witness the true and comprehensive function of religion and will find self-sufficiency through it, no longer

needing materialistic pursuits. During this period, the light of God's guardianship will be revealed on Earth through His perfect representative, so that the path will be distinguished from misguidance, and servitude from polytheism and disbelief. In this context, humanity will reach the highest levels of guidance. Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar reports: "I heard Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) say about the verse of Allah, 'And the Earth will shine with the light of its Lord' (39:69), he said: 'The Lord of the Earth is the Imam of the Earth.' I asked, 'What will happen when the Imam emerges?' He replied, 'Then people will be in need of neither the light of the sun nor the light of the moon, and they will suffice with the light of the Imam'" (Majlisi, 2007, vol. 7, p. 326).

The above narration reflects the truth that the Earth, before the appearance of the Imam, was immersed in a pervasive darkness, and the event of the appearance will transform the governing flow of the Earth from darkness to illumination. This illumination has its roots in the light of God and His guardianship, which will be realized through the existence of the infallible Imam in the world. The guidance associated with this light is such that individuals, according to their existential capacity, will reach the highest levels of knowledge, illumination, and guidance. This human perfection will result in the perfection of their servitude, and only the guardianship of God will prevail in every home and dwelling, both in the morning and evening. As Imam Ali said regarding the Quranic verse, "He it is Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion, to manifest it over all religions, even though the polytheists may dislike it" (9:33), he stated: "No settlement will remain except that in it, every morning and evening, the oneness of God will be proclaimed" (Tabarsī, 1997, vol. 24, p. 401).

3. Capitalistic Tendencies Against Equal Provision for Humans

Consumerism is the prioritization of consumption, with the goal of material well-being and wealth. In the process of consumerism, the Western world shifted from a production-oriented ethic, or Protestant work ethic, to a consumption-oriented ethic. As a result, the West transformed from a productive society to a consumer society, where the central principle became the maximization of consumption and pleasure-seeking. Following the West, under the influence of advertising and other factors, developing countries also became consumer societies. To accelerate the transformation of society into a consumer-based one, policies such as organizing exhibitions, establishing large chain stores, and introducing affordable consumer goods in large quantities were employed.

The difference between a consumer society and its predecessors was that, previously, the consumption of abundant goods was exclusive to the wealthy and affluent classes. However, in the consumer society, the consumption of these goods became widespread among ordinary people as well. Of course, in terms of consumption, expensive and high-quality goods were still reserved for the wealthy, while cheap and lower-quality goods were aimed at the general population. In other words, the construction of action follows the construction of thought. To build thought, belief and the connection between the mind and the external world are necessary. For creating this belief and the bridge of connection, language plays the most significant role. Language is filled with value-laden concepts and plays a crucial role in advertising and legitimizing. Mass media, alongside language, utilizes symbols and signs to construct action, and in our case, to promote consumerism. (Barber, 1991, p. 127).

Modern consumerism began in the late 19th century with the slogan "Let the borders be free" and reached its peak in the first half

of the 20th century. In this paradigm, people view consumption as something based on their desires, not merely on the fulfillment of needs. They seek to buy things that are ingrained in their minds through advertising via films, newspapers, television, and other promotional methods. In this desire and craving, an individual's financial capability is not taken into account, as the criterion for them is not need fulfillment, but rather want.

This phenomenon, dominant in modernism, stands in opposition to the era of the appearance (of the savior). The era of the appearance marks the death of the capitalist front. In this period, there will be no hierarchical classes of rich and poor, and no one will be able to accumulate wealth by stimulating humanity's greed and sensual desires, while others perish from hunger. During this time, the Earth will offer its wealth and resources to humanity, and by moving away from consumerism, wastefulness, and materialistic greed, people will reach a level of self-sufficiency where they will reject the acceptance of charitable gifts. The Prophet of God said in this regard: "When Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) appears... wealth and alms will be distributed in the streets, but no one will be found who is willing to accept them." (Maqdisī al-Shāfiʿī, 2010, p. 166).

In this era, the sustenance of humanity will be pure and free from the impurities of wealth. On the other hand, in accordance with God's promise to bestow blessings upon the faithful communities, He will send down an abundant and boundless provision upon the people of the time of the appearance. During this time, blessings will flow into all aspects of human life, and the efforts and economic activities of people will yield exponentially greater results than before; because faith and piety are the two fundamental realms through which blessings enter human life in the most complete form during the era of the appearance. "And if the people of the towns had believed and been

God-fearing, We would certainly have opened up to them blessings from the heavens and the earth" (Quran 7:96).

Indeed, to the extent that a person treads the path of truths and follows the way of monotheism, humbling oneself before the Almighty, a flood of mercy and blessings will increasingly flow into their life. Imam al-Sadiq, regarding the blessings of the era of the appearance and the self-sufficiency of people, states: "When our Qā'im [the Upriser, Imam al-Mahdi] rises... the earth will release its treasures, revealing them in such a way that people will see it with their own eyes on the surface of the earth. Those who possess the zakat will seek someone in need to give their zakat to, but they will find none." (Mufid, 2011: p. 363).

4. Mechanization and Human Freedom from the Constraints of Machines

Among the distortions in the economic landscape of the world after the Renaissance is the dominance of human desires over the natural foundation of creation. During this period, the West sought to push the world further towards industrialization in order to reap greater profits. In this process, products were produced that filled the pockets of Western companies with wealth, while pushing humanity into serious physical, psychological, and spiritual dangers. Nature, in turn, was suddenly devastated, with industrial factories and a vast shift in consumption patterns replacing the healthy model. This type of exploitation of nature for economic growth is condemned and rejected in the Quran, as, on the one hand, human beings and their spiritual qualities take priority and are given precedence over mere economic considerations. On the other hand, this form of economy has led to serious issues and challenges for humanity.

With the emergence of modernity, societies increasingly moved towards industrialization, which led to an unprecedented rise in pollution, including air and water pollution, as well as contamination of all food products. As machinery and industrial equipment proliferated in human life, carbon monoxide in the air caused the spread of various respiratory diseases, cancer, and other ailments. Meanwhile, factory waste has posed serious environmental threats to seas, lakes, and aquatic life.

In addition, machine-based life can be used through artificial intelligence to diagnose various human diseases. However, when industrial automation is prioritized for economic purposes and material benefits, and the world moves towards virtuality for the sake of human convenience, essential human activity will be endangered. One of the common consequences of this is the spread of physical inactivity in humans, which leads to an increase in cardiovascular diseases, strokes, cancers, as well as elevated blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.

With the dominance of this trend, human labor will gradually be reduced, and only the owners of capital will be able to participate in such industries. This phenomenon increasingly widens the gap between the rich and the poor, and its effects will not only endanger the mental health of workers and labor forces but also threaten their families. The famous French sociologist, Émile Durkheim, in his book, introduces the concept of alienation of the individual from society, stating that traditional societies had a single function, and the various parts within that society worked for that common goal and function. A collective conscience prevailed within them, whereas, with the advancement of machine-driven societies, this moral density led to the emergence of a new form of collective conscience. This new form is realized through the individuality of individuals, and there is

no longer the prior commitment to a single collective conscience in society (Durkheim, 2012, p. 152).

The Mahdist front does not aim to confine humanity to a machine-driven life. In that era, science will reach such a level of prominence that it will have a comprehensive plan for all the vital systems of humanity, without causing individuals to face alienation from themselves or leading them into forgetting their true nature. This is because, during this time, the truth of religion will emerge, and people, with their intellectual perfection, will witness the realities in the light of God's comprehensive guidance, as the selfish desires that have been the primary obstacles to the formation of knowledge and understanding will be removed. In fact, one of the pitfalls of thought, according to the Quran, is the inclinations and desires of the soul. If a person does not guard their thoughts from the danger of selfish desires, they will become ensnared in misguided paths.

In this era, sciences will be free from harm, and healthy technology will create the most beautiful life for humanity—one that no one has yet been able to envision. The process of the appearance will never be in opposition to the progress and evolution of human sciences. Rather, noble sciences will continue to develop within the framework of God's creation, just as they evolved from two letters to twenty-seven letters. The era of the appearance will be a time for the expansion and flourishing of knowledge and wisdom, and the Islamic utopia will become a city of science and knowledge. With the arrival of the world's Savior, just as oppression and tyranny give way to justice and fairness, and social disorders are resolved, ignorance and lack of knowledge will also give way to science and wisdom, and the world will be filled with the light of reason and knowledge. Sciences and knowledge that have remained hidden behind the curtains through the ages will be revealed, and the boundaries of knowledge and

learning will expand to the farthest corners of human existence.

In this era, with the growth of intellects, human knowledge will reach a level where women will also be capable of making sound judgments. Imam al-Baqir has elaborated on this scientific progression, stating: "When our Qā'im [the Upriser, Imam al-Mahdi] rises, God will place His hand of mercy upon the heads of His servants, completing their intellects and nurturing their thoughts" (qaa, vol. 1, p. 25). In the time of that Imam, women will judge within their homes according to the Book of God and the Sunnah of the Prophet (Majlisi, 2007, vol. 52, p. 352).

With the intellectual and scientific evolution of humanity, a new civilization will emerge in the world that will make the inherent superiority and distinction between spiritual and material civilizations evident to humankind. In this new civilization, without relying on the material technology and godless ideologies of the West, humans will be able to meet one another across the world by utilizing the components of faith and the guardianship that will govern among the believers throughout existence. It is narrated that, during the time of that Imam, a believer in the East will be able to see his brother in the West, and a believer in the West will see his brother in the East (Majlisi, 2007, vol. 52, p. 391). In another hadith from Imam al-Sadiq, he said: "When our Qā'im [the Upriser, Imam al-Mahdi] rises, God will strengthen the ears and eyes of our Shi'a in such a way that there will be no need for an intermediary between them and the Qā'im. He will speak to them, and they will hear his words, and while he is in his place, they will see him" (Kulayni, 2008, vol. 8, p. 240). The expression of strengthening ears and eyes refers to activating a potential that God has placed within the human being's existence, which will be realized in the era of the appearance. Interpreting this as modern-day tools, given the inherent differences between the Renaissance paradigm and

the concept of the appearance, would be an unjustified and baseless interpretation.

Just as during the era of Prophet Solomon, God granted him the means to communicate between humans and animals for understanding matters and facilitating interactions, in the era of the appearance, with God's permission, this process will be realized on a much larger scale. This is because the time of the appearance is the most significant historical event that has been prepared for since the beginning of creation. It holds a far greater potential for the emergence of human and cosmic capacities than the temporal scope of that Prophet of God. Moreover, the faith and influence of Imam al-Mahdi (may God hasten his appearance) surpass those of that Prophet, and his realm of dominion encompasses the entire universe, whereas the dominion of Prophet Solomon was limited. Imam al-Baqir says: "Prophet David and similarly Prophet Solomon ruled over the region of the Levant, extending to the lands of Istakhr (from Palestine and Lebanon to Iran)" (Majlisi, 2007, vol. 14, p. 5).

This civilization, in addition to its architecture, will encompass all aspects of human life. The formation of globalization under the servitude of God, along with the effects mentioned earlier, is one of the most significant gifts of this civilization—an achievement unparalleled in history. Never before have humans, despite differences in thoughts, tastes, and actions, been able to live in a unified manner, free from any kind of contradiction or conflict, in an environment of peace and tranquility under one flag with heartfelt contentment. As some have rightly pointed out regarding this important characteristic of the new civilization: "Civilization is the establishment of order and harmony in the relationships of the people of a society, eliminating destructive collisions and conflicts, and replacing them with a race towards growth and perfection. In such a way that the social life of

individuals and groups in that society brings forth and activates their constructive potentials" (Jafari, 1996, vol. 16, p. 233).

5. Security and Rights of the Human Society in Renaissance and Mahdist Utopia

Sexual ethics is a part of ethics in the broader sense, encompassing those habits, traits, and human practices that are related to the sexual instinct. The belief that abstaining from marriage leads to human spirituality disturbs the souls of both men and women equally, creating a painful struggle between the natural instinct on one hand and religious beliefs on the other. The emotional distress, which brings about severe consequences, always stems from the conflict between natural desires and social oppositional conditioning. Modern sexual ethics in non-Islamic societies, particularly in the West, does not accept any limitations or prohibitions on this matter, advocating for the complete freedom of individuals in this domain. However, the logic and reason dictate that we should fight against traditions and superstitions based on the impurity of sexual desire, and at the same time, we should not create conditions for rebellion, defiance, and distress of the sexual instinct under the guise of freedom and free development (Motahari, 2010, p. 128).

In the doctrine of Mahdism, religion has always emphasized the necessity of controlling this instinct so that the innate desire of humans does not erupt and take control, ensuring that the safety and rights of the human community are not jeopardized. On the other hand, the eruption of this instinct in individuals and society weakens human social character. This is because the social boundaries will be broken by this phenomenon, and individuals will transgress the boundaries of others. The falsity of the hypothesis of absolute freedom

in this regard becomes increasingly evident, and even the Renaissance society itself has become aware of this harm. However, the governing structure of Western civilization, if it wishes to maintain its standards, must justify these deviations. Otherwise, it must turn to a spiritualist ethical framework and acknowledge that all its material assumptions, which have been presented to Western humanity over several centuries, lack the necessary foundations.

The West sought to equip itself with modern weapons in an arms race and, by utilizing military power, dictate its goals to weaker societies. In this process, human rights were recognized to the extent that they did not conflict with Western interests. This trend grew to such an extent that the current world has become a storehouse of gunpowder, and developed countries are unwilling to practically accept international commitments to reduce their inhumane weapons. This is because they view military pressure as a strategic tool for achieving their grand agendas. The current arms race is the result of the Renaissance school's perspective on human rights on a global scale. This school espouses the doctrine of superiority and expansionism, and consequently, justifies aggression for itself, as it defines ethics as relative, tailored to its own objectives.

The West's struggle to access the resources and wealth of weaker nations has led to discrimination in the enjoyment of human rights, exposing the lack of sincerity in their humanist rhetoric. They view their own humanity as superior to second- and third-world nations. They perceive the superiority of a nation in its capacity for destruction and openly discuss the power to annihilate all of humanity: "The destructive capacity currently at America's disposal is sufficient to destroy the enemy, namely the Soviet Union, twenty-five times over. The opposing force in the hands of the enemy—the Soviet

Union—can annihilate us ten times, and the combined power of both the United States and the Soviet Union is enough to destroy humanity seven times over" (Kennedy, 1963: p. 66).

Indeed, the West, through its intellectual process, has endangered human security on various levels, including the spiritual, psychological, and even material realms. This is despite the fact that a doctrine lacking security will never have a place or widespread support. One of the most fundamental and essential aspects of any intellectual and practical movement is the provision and establishment of security for the people and the defense of their rights. Security is the cornerstone of individual and societal life, and it is a prerequisite for any kind of development, growth, well-being, and material and spiritual advancement. Security is not only confined to the social sphere, where it ensures the community's protection from corruption and evil, but a secure society must also embody this trait in the intellectual, spiritual, and psychological domains. Otherwise, it will not be able to create the promised historical society for humanity.

From the perspective of the Quran, the Medina of the Reappearance (of the Savior) will usher in an era of peace and security for humankind—an age in which people will no longer suffer from any form of fear, and human rights will not be violated in any way, whether physically, materially, emotionally, or otherwise. As the Quran states: “Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security” (24:55). This divine promise will be fulfilled when the school of the Reappearance achieves complete succession and

leadership on earth, and when no trace of the Renaissance worldview or materialist culture remains.

Among the goals and principles of a religious government are establishing security, defending against and confronting enemies, protecting the rights of the oppressed and downtrodden, resisting tyrants and aggressors, ensuring welfare and comfort, maintaining societal peace, and collecting and properly distributing public treasury. Such a government must combat disorder, foreign invasions, and the domination of bullies, while securing the rights of the underprivileged. These goals are to be fully realized in the era of the Reappearance, as the current security challenges facing humanity will no longer exist. Prophet Muhammad spoke of the security during this time, saying: “The government of the Mahdi will be such that two women will travel at night without fear of injustice or oppression” (Ṭabarānī, 1985, vol. 8, p. 197). And he also said: “Surely, God will complete this matter (His religion) so that a rider may travel by night from Sanaa to Hadhramaut and fear none but God” (Bayhaqī, 2003, vol. 9, p. 180).

Material security—in areas such as the economy, politics, and more—will be achieved through the tireless struggle and continuous battles waged by the companions of Imam al-Mahdi. This period will mark the peak of the confrontation between the forces of truth and falsehood, where faith and disbelief will clash until, by God's permission, the camp of truth attains ultimate victory and triumph. During this phase, the enemy will deploy all its efforts to destroy the school of God's guardian, and Satan will mobilize all his instruments so that the forces of falsehood might prevail. However, the divine will is that truth shall prevail in this historical moment of existence. After the martyrdom of a great number of believers under the banner of the Imam of the Age, this long-awaited historical hope will be realized.

Imam al-Baqir referred to this struggle, saying: “By God, the companions of the Mahdi will fight to such an extent that God alone is worshipped and no partner is ascribed to Him. So much so that an elderly and frail woman will be able to travel from one end of the world to the other, and no one will harass her” (Nu‘mānī, 2010, p. 283).

Based on this, alongside external security, inner security is also one of the major and fundamental objectives of the school of the Reappearance. In this era, due to the dominance of monotheism and servitude to God on earth, human beings will attain spiritual richness and reach such a level of cognitive and intellectual maturity that they will no longer be drawn to base desires and worldly attachments. This distinctive trait will lead to the flourishing and actualization of their spiritual and inner capacities. It is in this time that Satan and his powers of seduction will be destroyed by Imam al-Mahdi, the savior.

6. Complication of Human Life and Leading Humans to Unity

The current advancements of the West have not only failed to bring it true peace, but have also produced a climate marked by plurality, disorder, and anxiety—preventing individuals from pursuing the true purpose of their existence. In reality, modernity is composed of numerous seductive manifestations that, by implanting false material desires and aspirations, alienate humans from their true selves. It convinces them that the void left by the absence of spirituality can be filled with these superficial means.

This is the very nature of modernity and Western civilization—to intensify materialism in human life and increasingly entangle individuals in its various forms. In such a state, human life expands outwardly day by day, with ever more dimensions and aspects entering one’s existence. A person’s desires, shaped by a modernist

environment, are constantly renewed and redefined, to the point where they become overwhelmed by the multitude of material complexities—unsure of what they truly want from life or what they should be seeking. The legacy of modernity is complexity, frustration, and the bewilderment of the human being in the realm of materialism.

In such a way of life and worldview—unlike the era of the Reappearance—the more a person runs, the farther they seem from reaching their destination, and naturally, they find no real satisfaction in life. The complex, bureaucratic system not only threatens the individual dimensions of human existence but also disrupts its social aspects. Even for the simplest tasks, one must spend long hours in offices, banks, and various institutions. The crowded industrial cities, transportation systems, and constant air pollution only add to this sense of frustration. How can a human being, submerged in the environment of modernity and entangled in such levels of complexity and busyness, possibly reflect on themselves, their purpose in life, or spiritual meaning?

Modernity, relying on empirical science and its material achievements, seeks to establish a new domain of human life—one in which the individual can attain the utmost pleasures without ever feeling the need for religion. Yet it remains heedless of a crucial truth: that the only remedy for the human being amid the chaos of materialism is a return to religion and spiritualism, for the human soul inherently yearns for purpose. The fundamental question is this: when material existence itself leads to disillusionment, how can it possibly offer peace and fulfillment through the same tools that caused the despair? It is a false notion to believe that material civilization, with its vast complexities and endless distractions, can bring humanity tranquility and true well-being.

In the era of the Reappearance, human life will be freed from

material complexities and pluralities—unlike the current materialist system, which has drawn people into an endless competition driven by unceasing material desires. At the heart of this system lies a manipulative cycle of stimulation, where the constant creation of new needs and fleeting satisfactions keeps individuals trapped. Within this cycle, people suffer from the inability to compete and are psychologically conditioned to feel insignificant in society—believing they are lesser simply because they possess fewer material resources. In such a structure, one person owns private jets and yachts, while another dies from hunger due to the inability to afford food. In this unjust hierarchy, those with greater wealth rise to the top of the pyramid, while those unable to compete are buried at its base. As Gare (2001, p. 49) observes: "To be poor is to be without argument... Scientific language games have turned into the language games of the wealthy, where the richer one is, the greater the chance of being right." Within this framework, the Medina of the Reappearance represents the return from multiplicity to unity, and the liberation of humanity from the burdensome constraints of material excess and pluralities—products of Western modernity.

7. Material Justice and Realization of Inclusive Justice in the Universe

Human beings inherently possess a natural inclination toward justice, and this innate trait becomes one of the key components of the era of the Reappearance. Prior to that era, the world will be engulfed by a sweeping tide of oppression and discrimination. One of the primary reasons for humanity's desperate need for the school of the Reappearance—and a necessary precondition for the establishment of the Medina of the Reappearance—is precisely this overwhelming prevalence of injustice in the world. Only the divinely appointed

guardian will have the capacity to uproot such global oppression in a comprehensive and lasting way.

The materialist system of the West has never been able to present the concept of justice as an appealing and meaningful ideal to humanity. This is because, given the foundational principles of this worldview—the primacy of materialism, the pursuit of maximum pleasure, and an emphasis on endless diversity and consumption—true justice becomes unattainable. The world, under such a system, turns into a battleground of conflict and competition, where those with wealth and power dominate and reap the most benefit. The material order is inherently a field of constant struggle and conflict, and when the very nature of materialism carries such internal contradictions, how can it possibly serve as a foundation for justice?

On the other hand, as long as the standards in human society are shaped by the whims of the ego, satanic temptations, and aligned with the interests of the guardians of the Renaissance worldview, it is only natural that justice will be interpreted in ways that serve their agendas. In this way, the moral scale is distorted and manipulated, and the lines between truth and falsehood become blurred. As we witness today, values have been turned into disvalues, and those very disvalues now sit at the center of judgment—functioning as the criteria for measurement and analysis. In this state, the scales of social relations are thrown into disarray, and the ability to discern between good and evil becomes inverted and confused.

In this era, people long for the establishment of a just government and the emergence of a savior who will deliver them from the whirlpool of material entanglements and the corruption of moral standards. With the onset of the Reappearance, the first step will be the rectification of these distorted criteria—restoring values and disvalues to their rightful places, so that people's understanding and

expectations of justice can be properly realigned. Once this moral and intellectual framework is corrected, society will gain a clear and accurate understanding of the oppressive ruler versus the righteous reformer. Then, through their own choice and free will, people will form the foundation for the rise and global expansion of the movement led by the Imam of Justice. In this renewed context, people's aesthetic sensibilities will be transformed, motivating them to seek the correction of deviations and decline, and to dispel the pervasive darkness that has overshadowed the earth.

This process of reform will culminate in humanity reaching the realization that the Imam himself embodies the essence of truth, justice, and the very standard by which justice is measured against oppression. The fulfillment of his will on earth will equate to the establishment of absolute justice throughout existence. This is because, apart from the will of God, the Imam will have no other desire, and his divine will will be perfectly in harmony with the will of the Almighty. It is for this reason that some have referred to religion as the measure of human actions. Both the Imam and the religion move in the same direction, reflecting God's will without any deviation or deficiency. As 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī (2009, vol. 18, p. 54) states: "The measure refers to the religion contained in the Book, and the Book has added to it. Religion is called the measure because the beliefs and actions of human beings are judged by it, and on the Day of Judgment, their deeds will be weighed according to it, and they will be recompensed. Therefore, the measure is the religion with its principles and branches."

The Imam, who embodies the essence of justice and the standard by which truth is distinguished from falsehood, will, in the City of the Reappearance, judge the people without needing evidence or falling into error. His judgment will restore true justice to the

world. As is narrated: “The judgment of Imam al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) will be based on reality and will be informed by divine knowledge, while the judicial practices of Prophet David (peace be upon him) and Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) were based on testimony and oaths. It was only for a very brief period that Prophet David (peace be upon him) judged according to reality” (Majlisī, 2007, vol. 53, p. 90).

Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, one of the hadith narrators from the Sunni tradition, reports from the Prophet that the just conduct of the Mahdi at the time of his appearance will be such that all people, as well as the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, will be completely pleased with him. The Prophet said: “I give you glad tidings of the Mahdi. He will be raised among my community at a time when people are in conflict and earthquakes occur. He will fill the earth with justice and equity, just as it had been filled with oppression and tyranny. The inhabitants of the heavens and the earth will be pleased with him. God will enrich the hearts of the nation of Muhammad with contentment, and none will be in need of another” (Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, 1981, vol. 4, p. 104).

Thus, in that era, the world will no longer witness the overwhelming injustices of arrogant global powers who, under false pretexts, annihilate thousands of innocent people—while humanitarian institutions not only fail to prevent these atrocities but, through their silence and official resolutions, effectively endorse the crimes of the oppressors. In that time, oppressive powers will no longer be able to dominate weaker nations, and the resources of such lands will no longer be plundered under excuses like combating terrorism. Instead, people of every race, language, and nation will enjoy equal access to resources and blessings. Imam al-Baqir states: “When the Qāʾim (the Upriser) from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) arises, he will

distribute wealth equally and will deal justly with the people” (Majlisi, 2007, vol. 52, p. 351).

Conclusion

Today, the schools of Modernism and Postmodernism are fraught with numerous challenges, reflecting the materialistic spirit that pervades their various dimensions. Within this context, the Renaissance school and the doctrine of Mahdism represent two fundamentally distinct paradigms—each rooted in a different essence and reality. As a result, their respective governing structures reveal inherent contradictions. For instance, the Renaissance promotes values such as hedonism, the pursuit of diversity, and a sense of independence from the unseen (supernatural realm). In stark contrast, the doctrine of Mahdism is founded on principles such as the necessity of connection with the unseen world, the imperative to control and guide human desires, and adherence to the moral frameworks established by God. Thus, any fair-minded and perceptive individual will quickly discern the profound opposition between these two paradigms—both in their theoretical underpinnings and in the societal models they advocate.

Some view modernity as a double-edged sword—like a knife—claiming it can be used for either beneficial or harmful purposes, depending on the user. However, as previously explained in detail, there exists an intrinsic and essential conflict between modernity and Mahdism at both the foundational and structural levels. This is not a superficial or practical disagreement but a fundamental clash between faith and disbelief, light and darkness. Modernity is grounded in materialism and inspired by satanic teachings about existence. As such, it denies monotheism, belief in the unseen and the hereafter, and the spiritual dimensions of human beings, working vigorously to distance mankind from these truths. In contrast, the

movement of the reappearance of the Mahdi is destined to realize these divine realities in their most complete form within the cosmos. In the era of reappearance, a unified and global servitude to God will emerge, laying the foundation for a new Islamic civilization and other promised transformations. Each of these outcomes will arise only after the downfall of the dominant Renaissance-rooted culture. Thus, it is not coherent to promote the idea of coexistence or harmony between the Mahdist vision and modern technology, nor to speak of a machine-centered life within the era of reappearance. The relationship between modernity and Mahdism cannot be framed as one of mutual cooperation—because to do so would require reconciling deep-rooted contradictions in both principles and practical application.

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